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Subject Big Cypress Preserve Volunteer Program

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PRESS RELEASE

## SPORTSMEN UNITE AGAINST VOLUNTEER CIVILIAN POLICE FORCE IN BIG CYPRESS

The National Park Service is moving forward with plans to establish a volunteer force charged with patrolling the Off Road Vehicle trail system in the three quarter million acre Big Cypress National Preserve. Following are a few of many reasons this effort is unreasonable and totally unnecessary.

1. An Off Road Vehicle count was done by the Big Cypress Sportsmen's Alliance during the 2008/2009 hunting season. This count was done during the eleven weeks of Muzzleloading Gun and General Gun hunting seasons. The results of this count established that there was an average of 122 Off Road Vehicles per week in the Preserve. 122 Vehicles spread out over the three quarter million acre Preserve amounts to One vehicle per Four Thousand Eight Hundred acres. You can drive your Off Road Vehicle for days in the Preserve and possibly pass one or two other vehicles in any given day. In addition to that fact, over the past thirty years I have yet to encounter one hiker in the interior of the Preserve. This eleven week annual hunting season represents Eighty to Ninety percent of the total annual Off Road Vehicle impact on the Preserve. This extremely minimal annual Off Road Vehicle impact on the Preserve alone renders the planned volunteer force unreasonable and unnecessary.

2. The Park Service plans to provide All Terrain Vehicles to these Volunteers along with a short training course and turn them loose in some of the most hostile terrain in the country. The Big Cypress National Preserve is serious Swamp Buggy country. Even an experienced person with vast knowledge of the area will encounter serious problems and dangers traversing the ORV trail system on anything short of a Swamp Buggy.

3. Par for the course for the Park Service, we the Traditional Cultural people nor the ORV advisory committee have in any form been consulted as to our desire for or the necessity of this Volunteer force. We were simply informed that the process was under way.

4. We do not visualize any of the Traditional Community people volunteering for this completely unnecessary program. We do visualize people from the Extreme Enviro community lining up to participate for obvious reasons.

5. The Park Service says they don't have the time to pursue getting the partnership agreement between the NPS and FWC signed in order for the FWC TO help in reversing the anti ORV attitude of the Park Service, yet they do find time to pursue the Addition Lands Alternative fiasco and this unreasonable, unnecessary volunteer program.

6. The National Park Service has systematically abused the Traditional Cultural right of the public going all the way back to the 1974 Preserve creation. The National Park Service after illegally denying ORV assess and other Traditional Cultural rights to the Addition Lands for 20 plus years, proposes options completely contrary to the INTENT of the 1974 Preserve legislation. The National Park Service has completely failed to COOPERATE with the Fish and Wildlife Service as directed in the Preserve legislation etc. etc. etc.

If the National Park Service has any interest in accommodating the true will of the public they will cancel this unreasonable/unnecessary volunteer program at once or come forward with documentation that the program is truly the will of the public.

Sincerely

Lyle McCandless

Pres.

Big Cypress Sportsmen's Alliance